



Are You Losing Customers to Hold Time?

Businesses lose customers every day through the simple act of putting them on hold. This is an entirely preventable source of dissatisfaction.

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Abstract

Every business strives to do the best possible job acquiring and keeping customers. Doing those two things consistently, and doing them better than the competition, is no small challenge. Yet, many businesses lose customers every day through the simple act of putting them on hold. This is an entirely preventable source of customer dissatisfaction.

The best way to eliminate hold time is to add call-back functionality to your call center. Call-backs improve customer satisfaction and reduce churn by:

- Making the call center experience more enjoyable.
- Reducing abandonment rates.
- Converting more web and mobile visits into calls.

Traditionally, call-back solutions have been expensive and difficult to deploy. Today, Fonolo offers a cloud-based call-back solution that is quick to deploy, and very affordable.

Understanding the Customer Experience

The Call Center Experience Is Critical to Customer Loyalty

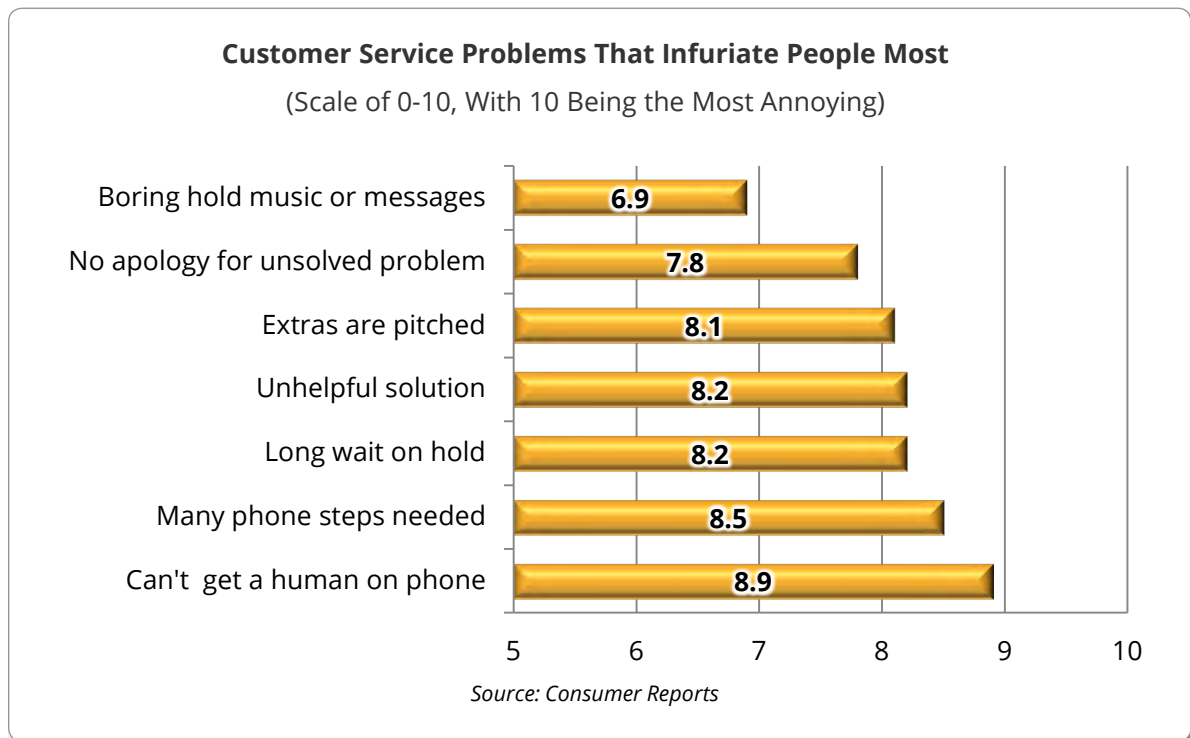
One of the easiest ways to lose a customer is through a poor call center experience, as confirmed by study after study. YouGov showed that 76% of consumers said that “just one unpleasant contact center experience was likely to make them take their business elsewhere”. A recent Zendesk survey revealed that 35% of customers stopped doing business with a company after a poor customer experience. And yet another study tells us that 6/10 customers have ditched a company because of poor telephone customer service.

Consumer expectations are extremely high these days and the competition is often only a click away.




Long Hold Times Are a Top Complaint


If you ask consumers what can ruin the call center experience for them, hold time is consistently at the top of the list. Consider a survey done by Consumer Reports on “Top Gripes” related to phone-based customer service (shown below). Of all phone related complaints, “can’t get a human” and “hold time too long” are ranked first and third.




To make matters worse, social media has empowered customers to publicly vent about long hold times with minimal effort. Just check out onholdwith.com, a site that collects tweets from people stuck on hold (sample tweets shown below). The effect of social media is that a single negative experience can drag down a company's brand for months after the event. The pressure has never been higher for call centers to be at the top of their game, every day.




wadeoharrow on hold with **Delta Airlines**
@DeltaAssist - I know there are weather issues, but keeping Platinum members on hold for an hour??? Really?
about 30 minutes ago




Airlines




juliannar0se on hold with **Gucci**
"Please remain on the line, your call is very important to us" ..only been on hold for 45 minutes. Gucci you SUCK.
about 34 minutes ago



Manufacturer



bmushroe on hold with **Blue Cross Blue Shield**
I have now been on hold with @CareFirst for over an hour. At my office. Where I'm supposed to be doing work. How is this acceptable?
about 35 minutes ago



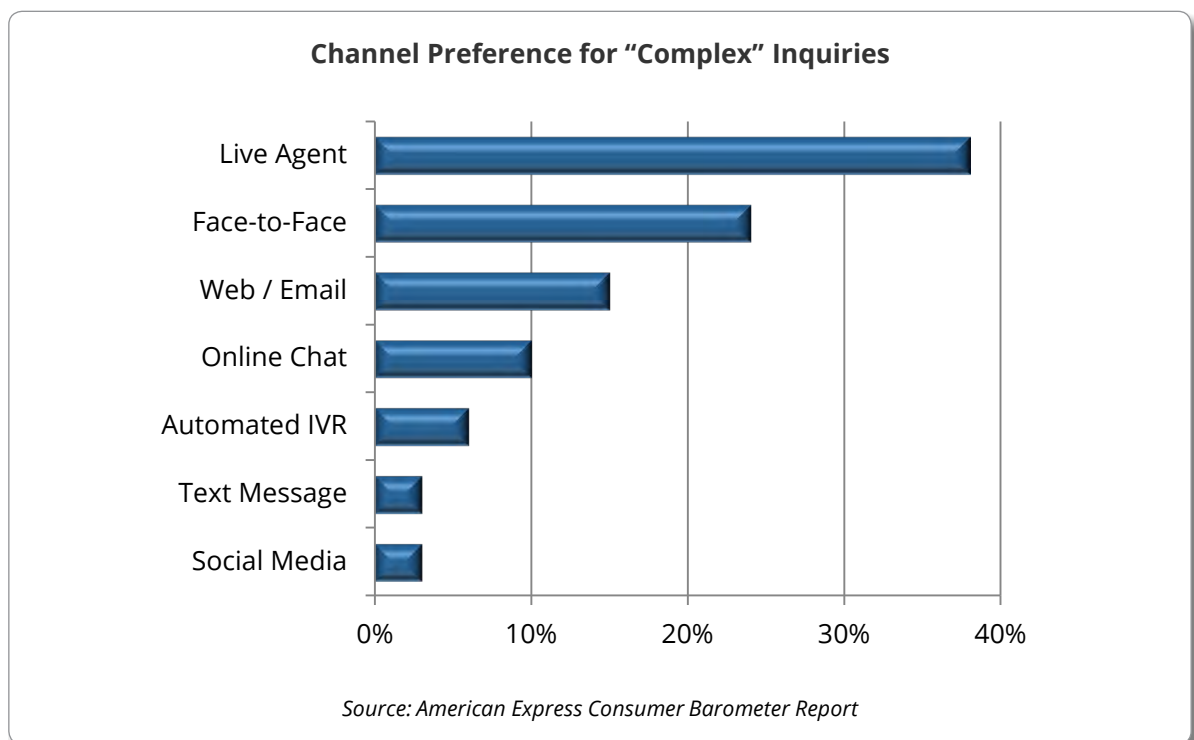
Healthcare

Today's Consumers Demand Multi-Channel Excellence

77% of consumers use more than one channel when seeking service, so a key ingredient to happy consumers is offering support where and when they need it. With 88% of all organizations delivering a multi-channel service experience, the differentiating factor will now be in the quality of those interactions.

So with multiple mediums available for contacting an organization, how does the voice channel stack up? The [Contact Center Satisfaction Index \(CCSI\)](#) shows a change in channel preference from year-end 2012 to mid-year 2013 with an increase in the voice channel, but a decline in consumer satisfaction! In addition, the American Express Consumer Barometer Report (shown below) shows that when it comes to support, a live agent conversation is the most preferred channel for anything other than a "Simple Inquiry".

In conclusion, the voice channel is more important than ever.



How to Reduce Average Hold Time

One way call centers can reduce average hold time (or ASA which stands "Average Speed to Answer") is to increase the number of agents. Given a sufficient budget, one can always add as many agents as needed to meet a target ASA. But of course, budgets in the real world are constrained, so this is not usually a viable solution. That's especially true if the contact center has occasional volume spikes. If a call center hires enough agents to meet demand at peak volume, there will be an excess of agent capacity at other times.

For call centers stuck with an ASA that's endangering the customer experience, the best option is to give callers the choice of receiving a call-back from the next available agent. Even if hold times are not excessive, adding call-backs can improve the bottom line in several ways:

1. Make the Call Center Experience More Enjoyable

When a caller is on hold, the risk is not only to the relationship with that particular customer, but to the company's online reputation as well. Social media amplifies this effect through sites like onholdwith.com. However, replacing hold-time with a call-back lets a company give back what the caller values most: their time. This translates into improved customer loyalty, higher net promoter scores (NPS) and general good-will.

Analysts Say ...	<p>StellaService: 71% of shoppers become extremely frustrated while waiting on hold.</p> <p>Forrester: 75% of customers think the option of a call-back is "highly appealing".</p>
Users Say ...	<p>"Our customers are delighted with the call-back experience. It really turns a negative into a positive."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Nationstar Mortgage (Fonolo Customer)</p>
The Data Says ...	<p>Of callers who used Fonolo call-backs, 95% said they preferred the experience to waiting on hold.</p>

2. Reduce the Abandonment Rate

When callers are on hold, they start to lose patience and hang-up. Each abandoned call reduces First Call Resolution (FCR) rates and, more importantly, is a bad memory for that customer. Worst of all, it may be the final straw that sends them to a competitor.

Analysts Say ...	<p>ContactBabel: 32% of contact centers experienced fewer abandoned calls after call-backs were added.</p> <p>StellaService: 67% of consumers will hang up while on hold without resolving their issues.</p>
Users Say ...	<p>"Our abandonment rates were really reduced during the times of high call volume."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Bright Horizons Family Solutions (Fonolo Customer)</p>
The Data Says ...	<p>Call centers that deployed Fonolo have seen an average of 24% reduction in abandon rates (some as high as 33%).</p>

3. Convert More Web and Mobile Visits into Calls

Self-service is the lowest cost channel for helping customers and they love the 24/7 access to instant information. But what happens when a customer “hits a wall” with self-service and needs to escalate to a phone call?

Analysts Say ...	eConsultancy: 83% of consumers require some degree of customer support while making an online purchase.
Users Say ...	“Fonolo really turns a negative into a positive ... and it dramatically raised engagement with our younger members.” – 1 st United Services Credit Union (Fonolo Customer)
The Data Says ...	Fonolo’s Web Rescue is 45% more effective at turning web visitors into callers, compared to traditional click-to-call.

By providing a smooth transition from web or mobile to an agent conversation, companies can improve customer satisfaction and conversion rates. This is even more important in the mobile context, which is the dominant mode of communication for younger consumers.

Instead of a customer having to leave the channel they started with (web or mobile) when a live agent is required, they can simply send their information to the call center (via the original channel) and have an agent call them back.

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of the Fonolo interface. The left screenshot shows a web browser window with a 'Questions?' dialog box. It contains a text input for 'Your Name:' with 'John Smith' entered, a 'Phone Number:' field with '+1' and '416-366-2500' entered, and a 'Call Me Back!' button. A 'What is this?' link and the Fonolo logo are at the bottom. The right screenshot shows a mobile phone screen with a similar 'Questions? We'll call you back.' form. It has a 'Name:' field with 'John Smith', an 'Enter your phone number:' field with '+1' and '(416) 366-2500', and a large green 'Start Call' button at the bottom.

Fonolo's Web and Mobile Rescue enable Visual IVR and Click-to-Call-Back

Fonolo Makes it Easy to Add Call-Backs

What is Fonolo

Fonolo is a cloud-based service that lets you easily replace hold-time with a call-back on all three channels: inbound call, the web, or a mobile app. Companies who add call-backs experience lower handle times, abandon rates and telco costs along with more efficient agents, increased sales and happier customers.

Adding Fonolo to Your Contact Center



In-Call Rescue

Give callers the option to receive a call-back when hold times are too long.

Let them *“press 1 to get a call-back from the next available agent”*.



Mobile Rescue

Let customers easily connect to a live agent, directly from within your mobile app.

With one tap on their smart-phone they can request a call-back and avoid hold time.



Web Rescue

Enable customers to seamlessly transition from web to live assistance.

Offer them a call-back and let them fast-track the IVR with just one click.

Fonolo easily hooks into your existing call center infrastructure, with minimal impact to your business processes. You can connect in several ways:

Connecting with SIP

The most convenient and cost-effective way to connect with Fonolo is via a “SIP trunking” connection. You can connect over the Internet, a dedicated L2/L2TP connection, or using a VPN.

Connecting with PSTN

If your call center doesn’t support SIP trunking, Fonolo can connect via the PSTN (traditional phone calls). When your customer accepts a call-back, simply transfer the call to a dedicated Fonolo DID. Likewise, to reach an agent, Fonolo will place a call to your existing phone number or dedicated DID.

The Fonolo Appliance

Fonolo can be enhanced with a turn-key appliance (which connects via SIP or PRI). This on-premise solution will comply with the strictest security requirements (no voice data leaves your data center), while still using the convenience and efficiency of the cloud.

Fonolo is compatible with all major call center infrastructure vendors and cloud-based call center offerings. We’re proud to be a member of the Avaya Select Partner Program.



Success Story: Bright Horizons

Bright Horizons Family Solutions® is a leading provider of high-quality child care. Their Avaya-based call center handles 31,000 calls a month with 163 agents. Like many organizations, they experienced periods of high call volume, which lead to long hold times. These peak periods also resulted in lost reservations and unhappy customers.



To remedy this, Bright Horizons deployed Fonolo's In-Call Rescue solution (using SIP trunking) and saw several immediate benefits: Peak periods did not last as long, abandon rates dropped by a 3rd, and customers were happier.

Want to learn more? Read the [case study](#) or watch the 3 minute [video](#).

"The speed to implement with Fonolo, the fact that it was just 15 days, was just amazing."

- Chris Abel, Director Contact Center Operations



Success Story: Nationstar Mortgage

Nationstar Mortgage is one of the USA's leading mortgage lenders. When faced with the challenge of rising call volumes, Nationstar chose Fonolo's In-Call Rescue solution to give their customers the option to receive a call-back from the next agent, rather than waiting on hold.



Deploying Fonolo's on-premise appliances allowed Nationstar to comply with the strict privacy and security regulations required by the financial industry.

"While we strive to answer every call as quickly as possible, sometimes hold times are unavoidable. Fonolo's solution allows us to offer our customers a positive experience, every time."

- Bill Pratt, Senior Vice President

